



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



NEWSLETTER

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child and to provide information to help others be supportive.

September - October 2016



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YOU ARE INVITED

The Compassionate Friends - Metrowest Chapter meets twice a month. Evenings on the third Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:30 pm in the library of St. Mary's Parish Center, Route 16, Washington St., Holliston. The parish center is located between the church and the rectory. Our next two meetings will be on:

Sept. 20th Oct. 18th

The **Tuesday** afternoon meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Milford parish center at 17 Winter St. **Please call Ed or Joan Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 by the last weekend or earlier if you plan to attend.**

Directions....On Route 16 (Main St.) going north through downtown Milford (Main St.) at Tedeschi's Market on the left, take a left at the lights onto Winter St. The parish center is the last building before the church. Going south on Route 16 (East Main St.) after Sacred Heart Church on the left, bear right on Main St., continue past Dunkin' Donuts on the right, proceed to the next set of lights and take a right onto Winter St. There is parking on both sides of the street. Look for Compassionate Friends signs to meeting room. Our next two meetings will be on:

Sept. 27th Oct. 25th

WHO ARE WE?

The Compassionate Friends is a nonprofit, nonsectarian, mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents and siblings.

Our primary purpose is to assist the bereaved in the positive resolution of the grief experienced upon the death of a child and to support their efforts to achieve physical and emotional health.

The secondary purpose is to provide information and education about bereaved parents and siblings for those who wish to understand. Our objective is to help members of the community, including family, friends, employers, co-workers, and professionals to be supportive.

Meetings are open to all bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings. No dues or fees are required to belong to the Metrowest Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.

The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace, but whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone.

We are The Compassionate Friends. ©2016

Weather Cancellation

In the event of inclement weather on meeting days or nights, if in doubt call:

**Ed or Joan Motuzas at
(508) 473-4239**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Chapter Information

Co-leaders

* Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239
 * Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Secretary

* Joan Motuzas 508/473-4239

Treasurer

* Joseph Grillo 508/473-7913

Webmaster

* Al Kennedy 508/533/9299

Librarian

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Ed Motuzas 508/473-4239

Senior Advisors

* Rick & Peg Dugan 508/877-1363

Steering Committee *

Judy Daubney 508/529-6942
 Janice Parmenter 508/528-5715
 Linda Teres 508/366-2085
 Mitchell Greenblatt 508/881-2111
 Judith Cherrington 508/473-4087
 Carol Cotter 774/219-7774

The chapter address is:

The Compassionate Friends
 Metrowest Chapter
 26 Simmons Dr.
 Milford, MA 01757-1265

Chapter Web Page
www.tcfmetrowest.com

Regional Coordinator
 Tom Morse
 66 Atwood Avenue
 Middleboro, MA 02346
 Phone (508) 572-3038
tjmorse521@gmail.com

The Compassionate Friends has a national office that supports and coordinates chapter activities. The national office can be reached as follows:

The Compassionate Friends
 P.O. Box 3696
 Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696
 Voice Toll Free (877) 969-0010
 Fax (630) 990-0246

Web Page: www.compassionatefriends.org

TRIBUTES, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

There are no dues or fees to belong to *The Compassionate Friends*. Just as our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, your voluntary, tax-deductible donations enable us to send information to newly bereaved parents, purchase pamphlets and books, contribute to the national chapter and meet other chapter expenses.

THANK YOU to the friends who help keep our chapter going with their contributions.

Love Gifts

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Parmenter in loving memory of their son **Tyler Ray Parmenter** September 4th. "We will always love you." Love Mom & Dad.

Mr. & Mrs. William Bardol in loving memory of their beautiful son **William H. Bardol Jr.** on his Angel Date August 5th.

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Painton in loving memory of their daughter **Heidi Ann Richer**.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Parkhurst in loving memory of their son **Jeffrey David Parkhurst** on his anniversary July 16th. And his birthday July 20th.

Mrs. Phyllis Curran in loving memory of her daughter **Monica Michelle Curran** on her anniversary September 12th.

Betty Myers in loving memory of her son **William Bruce Tagoe** on his birthday September 10th.

My apologies to Mrs. Virginia Lombard for incorrectly posting her son Robert L. Lombard Jr. anniversary date as June 27th. The correct date is May 27th. Found in the last issue under Love Gifts.

An important way to cope with grief is having an outlet, be it interpersonal, be it artistic, that will allow you to not have to contain your grief, but will give you an opportunity to express it, to externalize it to some degree.

R. Benyamin Cirlin, Grief counselor



Our Children Remembered

As a regular feature, the newsletter acknowledges anniversaries of the deaths of our children/siblings and their birthdays. This issue covers the months of September and October. If information about your loved one is missing, incorrect or our chapter files are in error, please send the correct data, including your name, address, and telephone number, the name of your loved one and the birthday and date and cause of death to the newsletter editor, Ed Motuzas, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265.

Anniversaries

September

- CHAD ARTHUR HOLBROOK
- KATHY A. BURNS
- MONICA MICHELLE CURRAN
- DEVIN J. EHRMANNTRAUT
- DONNA M. McHUGH
- SHAYNE M. DESDOCHES
- EMILY OTRANDO
- CHRIS GRIFFITHS
- GREG BRUNO
- ADAM N. YOUNIS

October

- ANDREW DELPRETE
- ROBERT NIELD
- ETHAN PATRICK CONNOLLY
- DAVID A. SCHNEGG
- MARC R. PEARLMAN
- MADELINE S. LAMSON
- CLIFFORD CROWE

Birthdays

September

- STEVEN "CHRIS" MARSHALL
- TYLER PARMENTER
- RICHARD A. THAMBASH Jr.
- SAMUEL O'DEFE OTOBO
- WILLIAM BRUCE-TAGOE
- RUSSELL J. TERES
- AARON STEVEN GRAY
- GREGORY P. CALIMERIS
- DANIEL R. ADILETTO
- JOSEPH LEE LaBRADOR
- MATTHEW PISAPIA
- BETSY CHICK-GRANT

October

- KATHY A. BURNS
- COLLIN T. MURPHY
- EVAN M. RODRIGUES
- EMILY OTRANDO
- DENNIS M. HENNIGAN
- JEFFREY MALCOLM FLYNN
- MATTHEW MOSHER
- KRISTIN LYNN McGRATH
- JAKE TAYLOR NAWN
- CAREN KING FIRTH
- TIMOTHY JAMES THORSEN





THE SIBLING CORNER



This page is dedicated to siblings together adjusting to grief thru encouragement & sharing

"Siblings Walking Together." We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends. We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us.

When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life. Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

THE GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

I was only eight years old when it happened. We, Mom, Dad, and I, were going to visit some friends until one telephone call tore our lives apart. The first thing my mother thought when the policeman said, "Through his head" was "he's dead." When I saw the tears streaming down her face, I started crying too. Mom got off the phone. I dreaded what she was going to say. Scott's been shot. My brother? No, it couldn't be. It was dark before Mom and Dad came back to the neighbor's where I was waiting for them to tell me he didn't make it. I didn't really understand that it meant he wouldn't be coming back. It's hard to believe that your 15-year-old brother won't be there to tease you or give you things he didn't want anymore.

The next few days are a blur now: people going in and out of the house, car after car driving in and people slowly getting out, all dressed in their best clothes. They all offer their condolences, then venture into the lounge room where they eat and chat; some even laugh. Why do they laugh, I wonder? So I go to my parents and say, "Wow! Look at the food," and I'm met with bloodshot eyes that look not at me but through me. I remember sitting at a long table with lots of people. So much food, but no one was touching it. I started to eat and saw Mom looking at me. I gave her a smile, but she wasn't really looking at me. I stopped eating too.

At the funeral, I cried because everyone else was. Everyone came in a big long line, like a snake I thought, and gave me a kiss and handshake with a "Sorry" thrown in for good measure.

Why, did my parents and sister get so many nice cards? I only got two. "Deepest Sympathy," they say. Nice verses too.

It's funny how it took a few years before I really cried. I cried deeply inside for my brother, for that big, tall, strong brother of mine whom I could always rely on. All those presents he gave me. A flattened one-cent coin that was squashed under the tractor and a gold coin he found at school. I liked them before, but now they are treasures.

This has been the biggest lesson of my life. Losing a loved one is the biggest lesson in anyone's life. I might have been young, but it seems I miss him more as I get older. All I can do is understand and maybe sometime help someone who is going through a similar period to the one I once experienced.

**Sally Heukers
TCF, Melbourne, Australia**

Rest, my brother, you now have
peace.
The wars within you all have
ceased.
And with the rising sun each day, Upon the
heaven you will play.
Until that day we meet again, Know I love you,
my brother, my friend.

**Sandra Evans
TCF, Kearsarge, NH**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Grief Makes You Crazy

I'm afraid I've got some bad news for you...grief makes you crazy.

I suppose that may be a bit of an exaggeration. In reality, it only makes you feel crazy.

In the beginning you feel totally out of sorts – like lash out at everyone, cry over everything, wear the same sweatpants for a week insane. Then over time you only feel a bit odd every now and then, like I'm a 5 foot 2 inch woman holding onto a 6 foot 1 inch man's tweed suit from circa 1950 hanging in my closet.

Stop looking at me like that.

Fortunately I also have good news...when it comes to grief, crazy is the new normal.

It looks different on everyone because we all experience grief in our own way, but on some level we all struggle to understand ourselves and the world around us in the face of profound loss.

Think about it, it makes total sense. Whether the loss was sudden or you were able to anticipate it, as soon as you understood and accepted that someone you love was dead or dying you began the grueling work of grieving. If ever a rationale for temporary insanity was needed, one could certainly be found among the range of reactions and emotions associated with grief and loss, shock, numbness, sadness, despair, loneliness, isolation, difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, irritability, anger, increased or decreased appetite, fatigue or sleeplessness, guilt, regret, depression, anxiety, crying, headaches, weakness, aches, pains, yearning, worry, frustration, detachment, isolation, questioning faith, to name a few.

Understandably, many will find it hard to acclimate to these emotions. One day you're walking along like normal and the next day you feel like an alien has invaded your body; your actions and reactions have become totally unpredictable and confusing. In search of something familiar you look to your primary support system, your family and friends, but they seem changed as well; some avoid you, some dote on you, some are grieving in ways you don't understand, and some are critical of the way you are handling things. Everyone is searching for the new normal.

The first few weeks are foggy. You wake up each morning thinking maybe it was all a bad dream and you muddle through the day trying to make sense of life without your loved one. Just when you start to get a grip (or not) you are forced to step back into your pre-grief life. It seems absurd that the world would keep moving in the face of your tragedy, but it has. Sadly most griever's can't abandon their duties for long – parent, employee, bill payer, pants wearer – you now have to figure out how to continue to exist in the roles that have been yours since before the death.

Alas that is not all. You must also incorporate new roles and duties, the ones you inherited when your loved one died, mowing the lawn, balancing the household budget, single parenting, closing old bank accounts, dealing with insurance, taking in grandchildren. God never gives you more than you can bear? We're seriously testing that theory.

Sometimes even more disorienting is the emptiness felt by those who have fewer responsibilities as a result of the loss. Perhaps you have spent the past year dealing with treatments and prescriptions, appointments, prayers, and hospice. Now that's no longer necessary and a life put on hold to be a caregiver must be restarted. Or perhaps you're a parent whose life was previously made colorful by a child and fast paced by the duties of parenting. Now you find yourself waking up in the morning to rush through the before school routine, only to realize there's no one to hurry out of bed or call to breakfast.



Life is forever changed and things feel meaningless, gray, and empty.

This is when you really start to feel crazy (you're not). Friends don't know what to say to you anymore. You are supposed to be back to work, school, the PTA, but you don't feel the same. You're worried you are alienating people by talking about your loved one and the death. You're confused about your purpose. Everything you knew about life has changed. You're questioning your faith and life's meaning. You're wondering if you are supposed to be getting better and you can no longer see the world in color.

We here at 'What's Your Grief' like to talk about a condition we call 'Temporarily unable to see rainbows'. Have you ever noticed that many of the resources, articles, books, and materials created to help people who are grieving use images of people staring off at sunsets, standing on a beach, or gazing into the clouds? These images inevitably lead to a conversation that goes something like this...



Eleanor: You know, my grief never looked anything like that

Litsa: Yeah my grief didn't look like that either.

Eleanor: As a matter of fact, my grief would not have been impressed with that sunset at all.

(continued on next page)



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



(continued from last page)

Litsa: Mine either. My grief would probably have wanted to punch that sunset in the face.

Not thrilled about sunsets. The irony is, when you are in the throes of grief you may really struggle to find the beauty and the joy in life and it may be quite unlikely that you would stop and admire the beauty of a rainbow or the vastness of an ocean. Those who cannot relate to these images begin to worry, what's wrong with me that I don't have such a zen perspective? The inability to derive joy from things that were once pleasurable can feel a lot like depression and it can be frightening.

Don't worry you're still not crazy. These are normal feelings. I know because I've experienced my own grief and I know because I've heard hundreds of other grievers talk about the same types of experiences. (If you're worried that you are actually experiencing a psychological disorder like depression, anxiety, or ptsd, read this and this and this.)

You've probably heard people say, 'the first year is the hardest', this is sometimes true. It is also true that the second year is often no picnic either. But, at some point, things should get easier. The intense and unrelenting distress of acute grief is replaced by less frequent moments of sadness, anger, and frustration. You will still have bad days, but you will know things are getting better when the bad days are outnumbered by 'okay' days.

This does not mean you are 'getting over it', moving on, or forgetting. An important part of healing is discovering the role your loved one will play in your life after their death. Of course at first you hold on very tight, afraid if you let go your loved one will disappear completely. You hold on to items (not crazy), you leave rooms untouched (not crazy), you pay their cell phone bill so you can continue to hear their voice on their voicemail (not crazy). These things are not crazy and some of them you may continue to do forever, but some you will eventually let go of as your grip slowly loosens and you realize that nothing short of amnesia could make you really let go.

And slowly...slowly...the faded colors of life become more vibrant. The world unthaws and you start to find beauty peeking through in places you would never have expected it. Your season of grief has left you weary but stronger and as you walk out onto the sunlit path you glance back as the form of the person you used to be disappears. You know you will never be the same and you begin to accept that you must integrate your loved one and your experiences and continue to live...a little bit wary, a little bit wise, and a little bit crazy.

What's your Grief
(An internet blog)
Posted by Eleanor 6

With a Little Help From My Friends

Feelings and emotions.....our lives are now about feelings and emotions. Our children have died under different circumstances and at different ages, but the reality of our child's death is the same for each of us.

Science now tells us that people can die of a broken heart. The heart is not damaged, there has been no heart attack, but the emotions are so great that the heart malfunctions and people die. Each of us was convinced when our child died that we, too, would die and the cause would be our broken heart.

But we didn't die. Initially, we lived in a state of shock. Then as time progresses we live in a state of suspension, depression, anxiety, grief, anger, resentment, overwhelming emotions and deep, deep sadness. We ask ourselves how anyone can move forward after this terrible loss. A parent's worst fear is now our reality each morning, each night, each day for the rest of our lives.

Or is it? The answer to that question is as complex as the universe and as simplistic as a paperclip: we shape and define our reality. We take control of our perspective.

We can choose to remain angry. We can choose to walk the nightmarish tightrope we have designated for our lives. We can choose not to forgive. We can choose to remember our child's death and not our child's life. We each will choose to perceive this tragedy differently throughout the process.....from the death of our child until we, ourselves, die.

For those of us in the Compassionate Friends organization, the choice is one of hope. Hope that we can laugh again, hope that we can take the edge from the pain, hope that our child's story will be remembered and told over and over again, hope that we will grow and learn to deal with the worst loss a human can endure. We each hope to learn serenity and find peace.

The process is a long one. The Compassionate Friends are important new companions on this journey because our lives are now divided into two segments: before our child died and after our child died. Many friends from before cannot understand why we don't get on with life. Some avoid us, others berate us, cajole us and generally irritate us because we can't "get over" this loss. Some people from our life before step toward us, stand by us and listen. These people will remain in the second segment of our lives. This second segment is now thought about as the "after our child died" portion. The people we meet in Compassionate Friends understand us. They are us. They listen and speak with their hearts. They have each experienced the loss of a child. They hurt with us, and their pain is as real as ours. We learn from each other.

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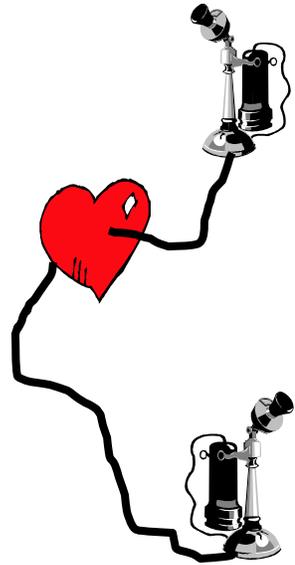
THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Phone Friends

Sometimes it helps to just be able to talk to someone; maybe at a time when pain or stress seems too much to bear. We maintain a list of Telephone Friends; people who are willing to listen, to commiserate, to give whatever support they can. In a time of need, feel free to call one of our Telephone Friends.

- Ed & Joan Motuzas, ...**Scott**, age 31, Kidney and Liver Failure,(508)473-4239
- Janice Parmenter,**Tyler**, age 29, Chronic Addiction,(508)528-5715
- Judy Daubney,**Clifford**, age 27, Suicide,(508)529-6942.
- Linda Teres,.....**Russell**, age 19, Automobile Accident,(508)620-0613
- Mitchell Greenblatt,...**Ian**, age 18, Automobile Accident,..... (508)881-2111
- Judith Cherrington,....**Jeffrey**, age 48, Cancer,(508)473-4087
- Sandra Richiazzi.....**Bryan C. Plunkett**, Automobile Accident,.....(508)877-8106



It is always useful to have more Telephone Friends; individuals who are willing to provide support and comfort via the telephone. The chapter provides guidance for those who want to help. When you listen and talk to the bereaved, you make a difference. A longer list of Telephone Friends increases the likelihood that someone will be available when needed. Call Ed Motuzas at (508) 473-4239 if you would like to be a Telephone Friend.

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Finding where we fit into the puzzle of life is not an easy task. Our Compassionate Friends will help us on that journey. Some will be years into their grief; some will still be in shock over the recent death of their child. But each of these people chooses to be here for us. They choose to share their pain and their methods of coping and regaining a semblance of a life. They choose to visit with us each month, talk to us on the telephone, e-mail us and be there when we need them. These new friends share our burdens, our heartaches, our triumphs and our biggest tragedy. They help us to focus on the permanently altered core of our being: the loss of our child.

Speaking openly, repeating our child's name and our pain is cathartic. Getting feedback from others who share in our growth is a positive, reinforcing necessity. For if we are to become the person we want to be, we need to hear what others have to say about their journey, their child, our journey and our child. We need to tell them what we have to say as well.

With tears and broken hearts we gather to talk and listen, to share and suggest, to ask and to answer. For we are the Compassionate Friends. We are kindred souls who come from every walk of life but who are bound together by one all-encompassing loss. Our children are dead. We choose to explore our loss, our feelings and our emotions together.

One day each of us will see a new day dawning and feel at peace within ourselves and the world. We will hold our child in our hearts as we gaze upon the beauty and wonder of life on this earth. We will think about our child with joy....joy that our child lived and loved and laughed. And we will remember the continuing hope provided by our Compassionate Friends that helped us find this new place of peace.

Annette Mennen Baldwin
In memory of my son, Todd Mennen
TCF, Katy, TX



A very special thank you goes out to those people that facilitate our meetings every month. It is through their unselfishness in stepping up, that makes our chapter a safe place for the newly bereaved to get through the grieving process.

Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

- Mitchell Greenblatt (Ian's Dad)**
- Linda Teres (Russell's Mom)**
- Rick Dugan (Larry's Dad)**
- Janice Parmenter (Tyler's Mom)**
- Judy Daubney (Clifford Crowe's Mom)**



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



NEWSLETTER MAILING LIST UPDATE (THIS PAGE WILL BE PRINTED EVERY OTHER EDITION)

We continue to update our mailing list. We want everyone who reads our newsletter to receive it; however, mailing costs make this update necessary. We want to send it where it is being read. Your donations allow us to print and mail this newsletter and to reach out to hundreds of parents and siblings.

Please fill out this form now if you wish to be added to or removed from our mailing list. This form should be filled out annually. If we don't hear from you in a year's time you will be notified through the newsletter that your name will be removed from our mailing list unless we hear from you.

If you are able to make a donation at this time, it will be gratefully received. Please mail to address below.

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

I (do___) (do not___) wish to continue receiving the TCF newsletter.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

(Parent / Sibling / Grandparent___) (professional___)

(Donation included___) Make checks payable to "The Compassionate Friends" or TCF

If there are any errors in spelling or other information in this newsletter, please call it to my attention so that I may correct it. Please use this page to send back information, reverse side is addressed for your convenience.

Mail to: TCF Metrowest, 26 Simmons Dr., Milford, MA 01757-1265

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

PLEASE ADVISE US OF ADDRESS CHANGES TO INSURE YOUR RECEIVING THE NEWSLETTER, THEY ARE NOT FORWARDED BY THE POST OFFICE.

Fold & Tape

The Compassionate Friends
Metrowest Chapter
26 Simmons Dr.
Milford MA 01757-1265

Fold & Tape



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF METROWEST



Just Let Me Be Sad

We live in a world where, if you have the means, pain and suffering are to be avoided at all costs. We are always looking for the next “quick fix” to alleviate discomfort with the least amount of effort required. In many cases, this means treating the symptoms while ignoring the root cause of the problem. In the United States, we live in a society so uncomfortable with emotional pain that when someone dies, society expects the outward mourning period to end once the funeral is over. When the bereaved do not cooperate with these prescribed time tables, they are often accused of “wallowing” in their grief. They are indignantly told to “move on” and “get over it.”

Do these statements mean prolonged outward grief is a sign of weakness? Maybe self-pity? Perhaps it means they think the bereaved secretly enjoy the pain, and the attention it brings? For those of us who have lost someone dear to us, we know that it could not be further from the truth. If we could, we would give ANYTHING to not feel this pain. The hidden meaning behind these statements is that our outward projection of sadness is an unwelcome reminder of all the negative emotions they’ve managed to stuff deep inside until the pain went away. I see it kind of like “out of sight, out of mind.”



So which is healthier? To bury the pain, only to have it lie dormant until some tragedy unearths it again, but this time stronger and more painful? Or to acknowledge that there is no quick fix to alleviate the overwhelming pain of losing someone you have built your life, and in some cases, your identity, around?

I would equate the first option to following the latest fad diet to lose weight quickly without exercising or changing your eating habits. Maybe you’ll pop some appetite suppressing pills and lose weight in the short term, but the chances of you keeping the weight off are slim, and the reality is that the next time you try to lose weight, it will likely be harder than the time before. The second option would mean facing the harsh reality that transforming your body to a stable, healthy weight requires permanently changing your eating habits and amount of regular exercise. It probably even requires you to readjust your expectations of what your ideal body should look like (sadly, most of us will never look like supermodels or pro athletes). In other words, the second option is HARD WORK, but it has the greatest likelihood of becoming a permanent reality.

But if I’m being honest here, I have to admit that given the opportunity, I would have gladly chosen to bury the overwhelming pain when my daughter died. Suppressing pain and emotions is what I had done my whole life until that point. The fact is that the pain of losing someone I loved MORE than my own life was too much to bury. I reluctantly, and resentfully, took on more pain than I could bear. I did so because I had no other choice.

For the first time in my life, I learned how to slowly take small steps with that unbearable load on my back. I learned that by sharing my story and my pain with others, whether it was support groups, counseling, or with other bereaved individuals, the load was reduced, even if it was only a very slight amount each time. By reducing the load over months and then years, it became easier to carry. I have since come to understand that the load will never fully go away, but I have learned how to balance it with the rest of my life. And as time goes on, the balance will become easier still. That is not to say that occasionally, the load won’t suddenly feel nearly as heavy as it did when my grief was new. And when it does, I’ll remember how to go back to taking small, careful steps until it feels lighter again.



To all those who cringe in discomfort when they see me experiencing outward emotional pain, I say this: just let me be sad. My intention is not to make you feel uncomfortable. I don’t expect, or want, you to follow in my footsteps. But I do expect you to respect the path I have been forced to take on my journey through life. I truly hope you never have to carry this load yourself.

***Maria Kubitz
TCF, Contra Costa County, CA
In Memory of my daughter, Margareta***

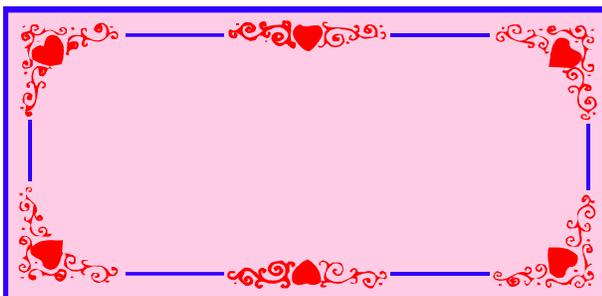
The Magic Light of Day

Often, when I think of you it's in the morning light. Or other times, I find that it is in the soft twilight. Somehow in those early hours or in the dusk of day, I feel our connection soundly, from your place so far away.

There's something very special about soft and dim sunlight that lets me know you're by my side and everything's alright. Not many would believe it's true, for heaven is far away. But all I know is, there you are, with me every day. You walk with me and comfort me, and somehow let me know. You'll guide the way along my life and meet me when I go.

***Kathie Winkler
TCF, Middleburg Heights, OH***

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TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Coming to your first meeting is the hardest thing to do. But you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not TCF will work for you. The second, third, or fourth meeting might be the time you will find the right person - or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.



TO OUR OLD MEMBERS

*We need your encouragement and support. You are the string that ties our group together and the glue that makes it stick. Each meeting we have new parents. **THINK BACK...** what would it have been like for you if there had not been any “oldies” to welcome you, share your grief, and encourage you? It was from them you heard, “your pain will not always be this bad; it really does get softer.”*